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Welcome to South Bend: Mr. Answerpants

Parker Ervick, Kelcey

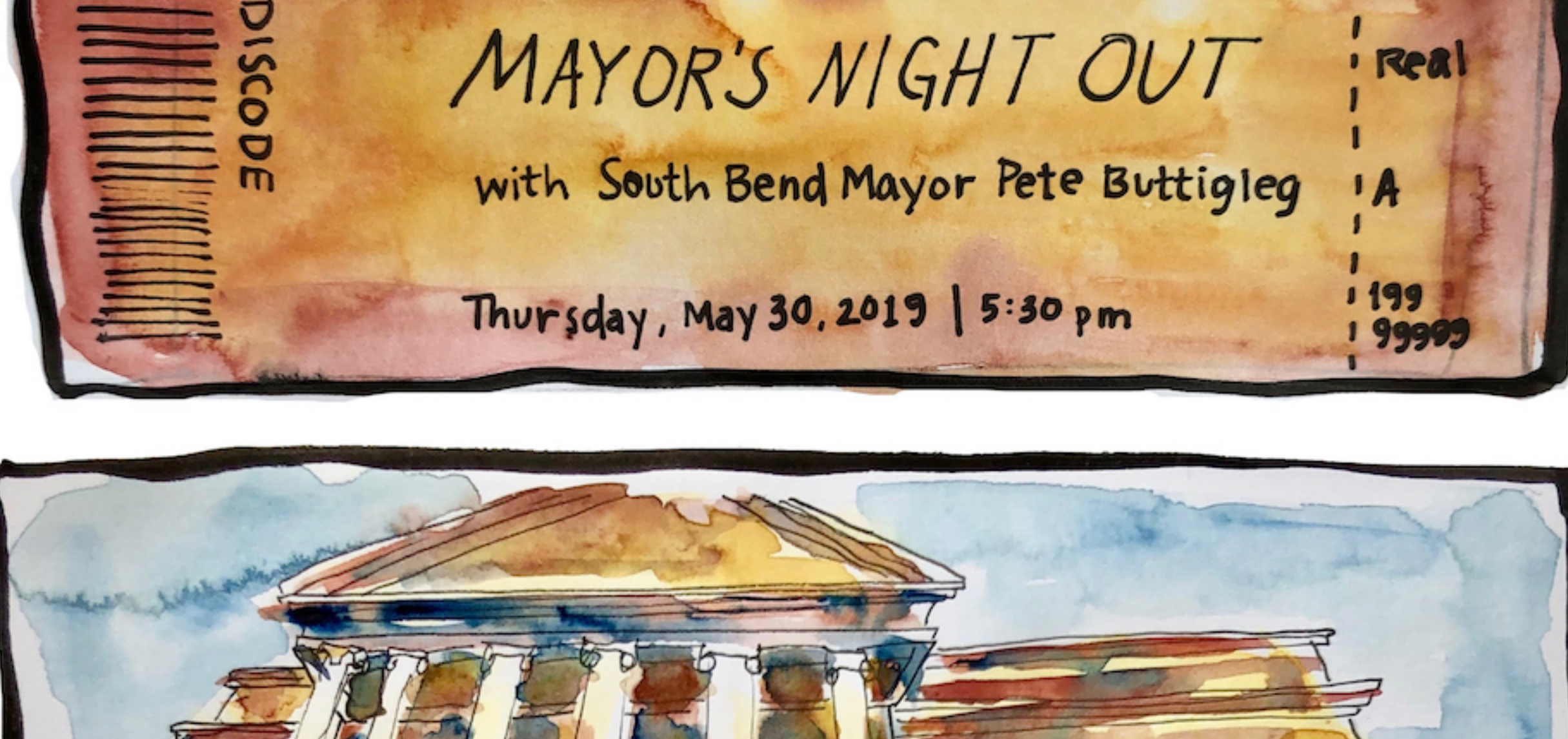
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Mr. Answerpants

kelcey parker ervick

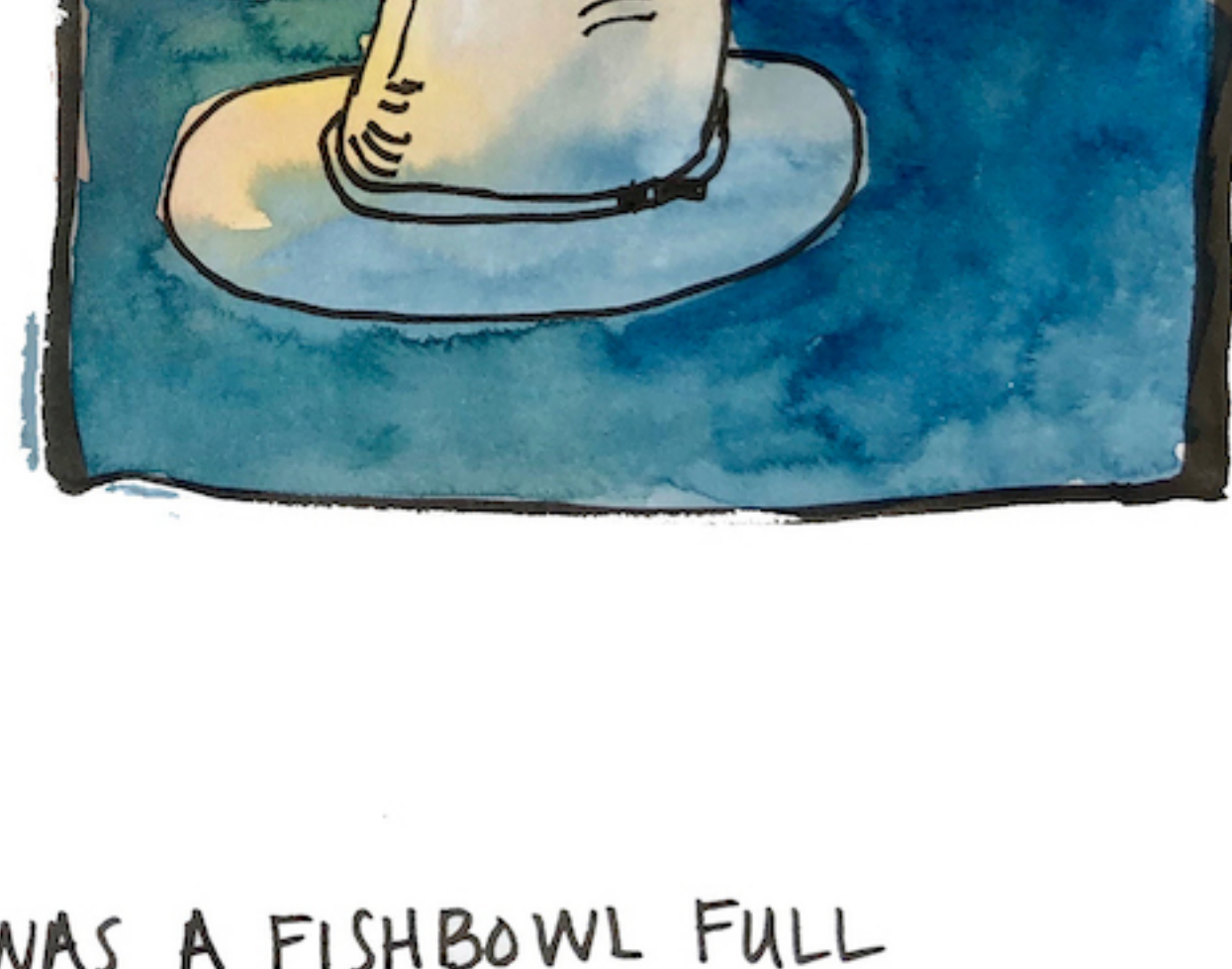


WE ARRIVED AT THE SOUTH BEND CIVIC THEATRE 45 MINUTES EARLY FOR MAYOR'S NIGHT OUT. TWO LINES HAD ALREADY FORMED WITH BAG CHECKS + HANDHELD SECURITY WAND CHECKS. WELL-DRESSED MILLENNIALS WEARING NAME TAGS HANDED OUT BLANK NOTE CARDS FOR AUDIENCE QUESTIONS.

WE'D READ ABOUT THE TOWN HALL FORMAT IN THE EMAIL ABOUT THE EVENT.

...residents can write questions and have them answered from a hat on stage.

(This sentence brought to you by the director of communications.)



INSTEAD OF A HAT, THERE WAS A FISHBOWL FULL OF QUESTIONS. THE 200-CAPACITY ROOM WAS ALMOST FULL WHEN MAYOR PETE TOOK THE STAGE.



With the spotlight on him, Mayor PETE welcomed everyone, introduced the city employees, and joked about topics we would NOT be discussing (his presidential campaign). Then he launched into city updates.

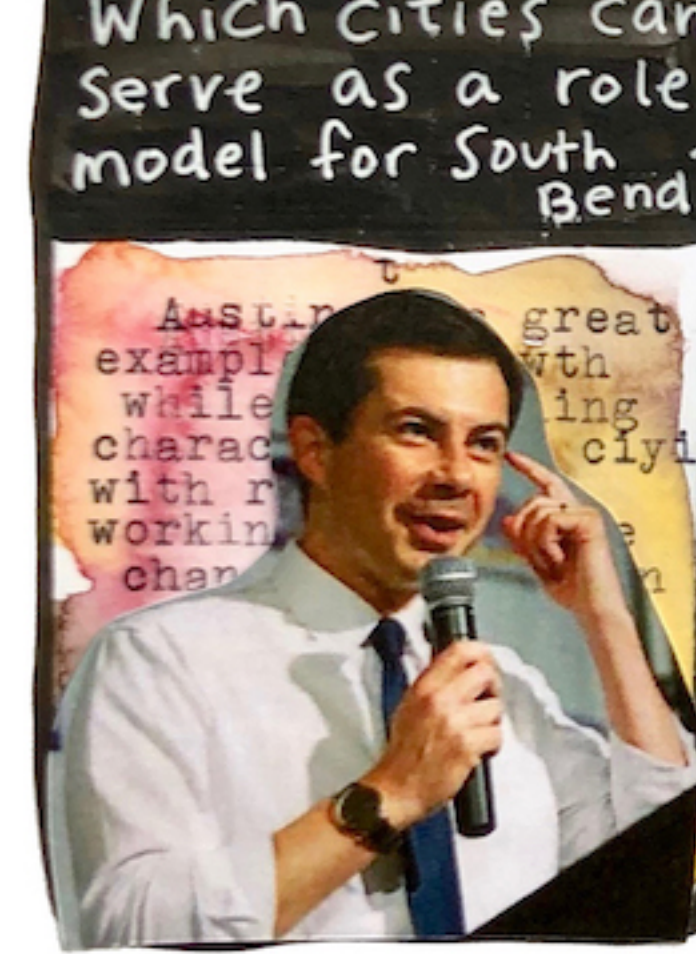


He introduced his DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH who would pluck the questions from the fishbowl.

And so it began, the **ANSWERING**.



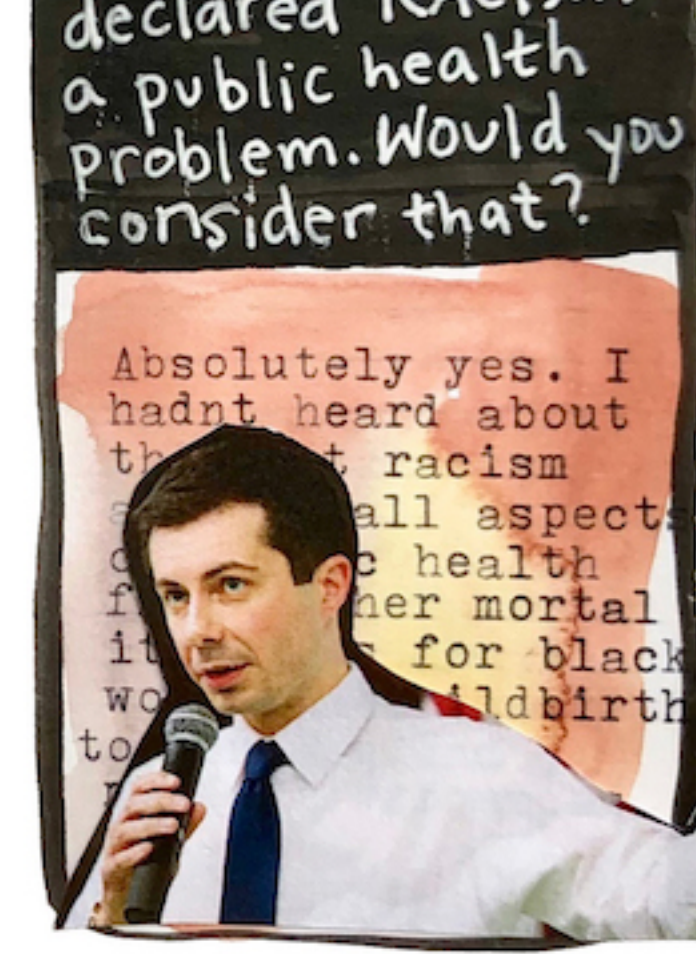
What are you doing to help small businesses?



What are you excited to see the next mayor accomplish?



What steps are you taking for a cleaner river?



Which cities can serve as a role model for South Bend?



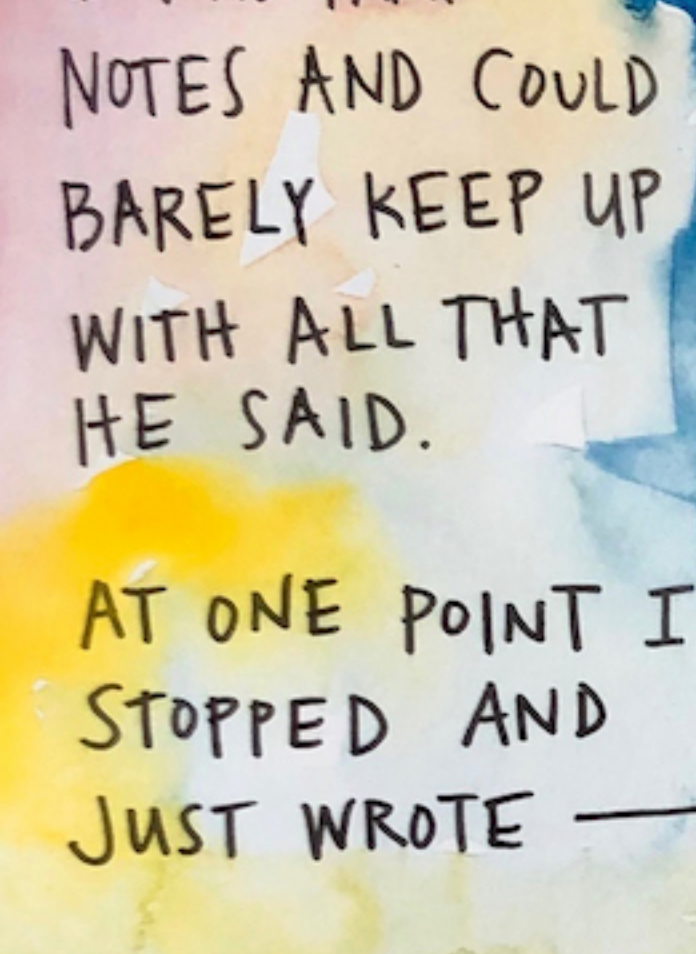
Why are there so many potholes?



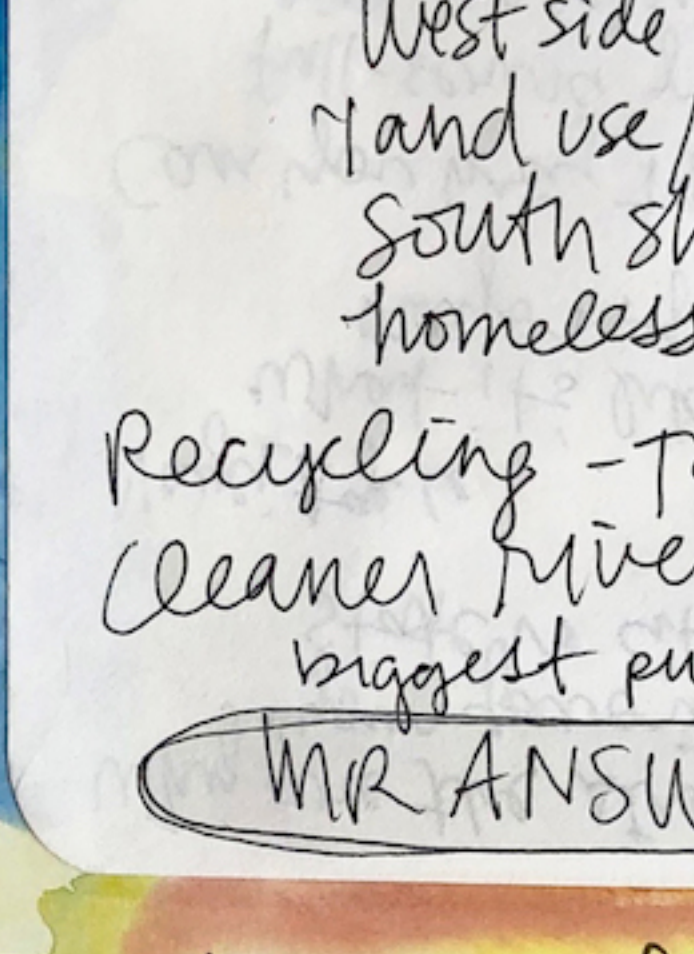
Milwaukee has declared RACISM a public health problem. Would you consider that?



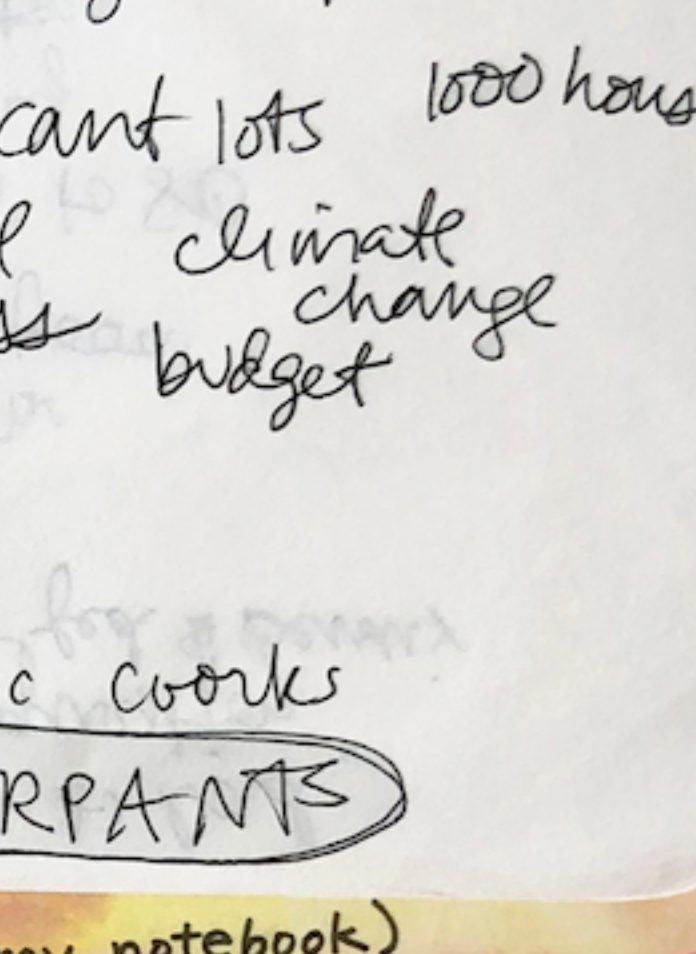
Do you have any updates on the city vehicle that damaged a woman's car?



How can South Bend face challenges of the future: automation, climate change, misinformation?



What can be done about Notre Dame football houses? The owners don't move their lawns.



Mayor Pete knew every facet of every issue raised.

I WAS TAKING NOTES AND COULD BARELY KEEP UP WITH ALL THAT HE SAID.

AT ONE POINT I STOPPED AND JUST WROTE →

growth equitable
area near ND- gentrification
West side
land use/ vacant lots 1000 houses
South shore climate change
homelessness budget
Recycling - Todd
Cleaner River
biggest public works
MR ANSWERPANTS

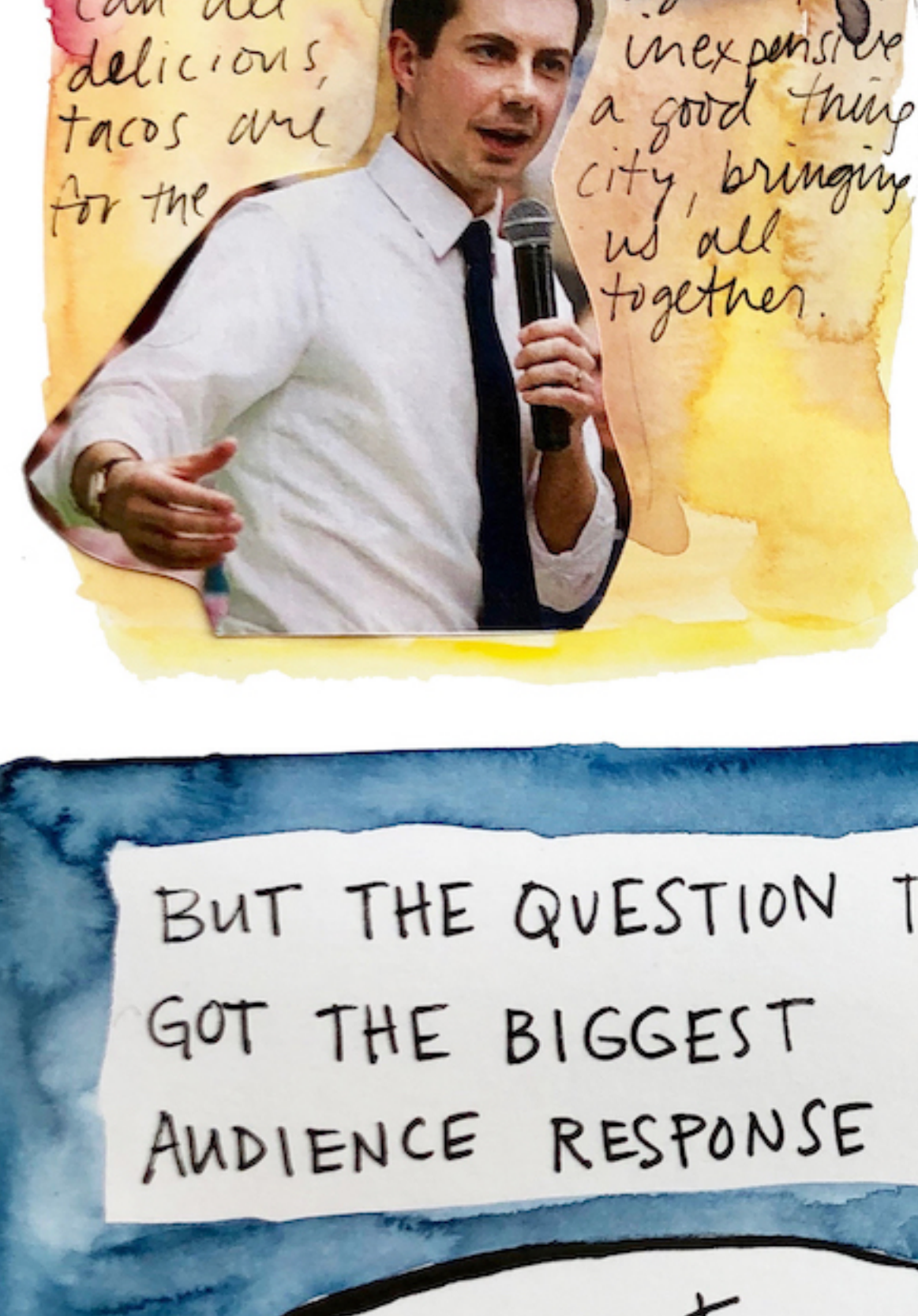
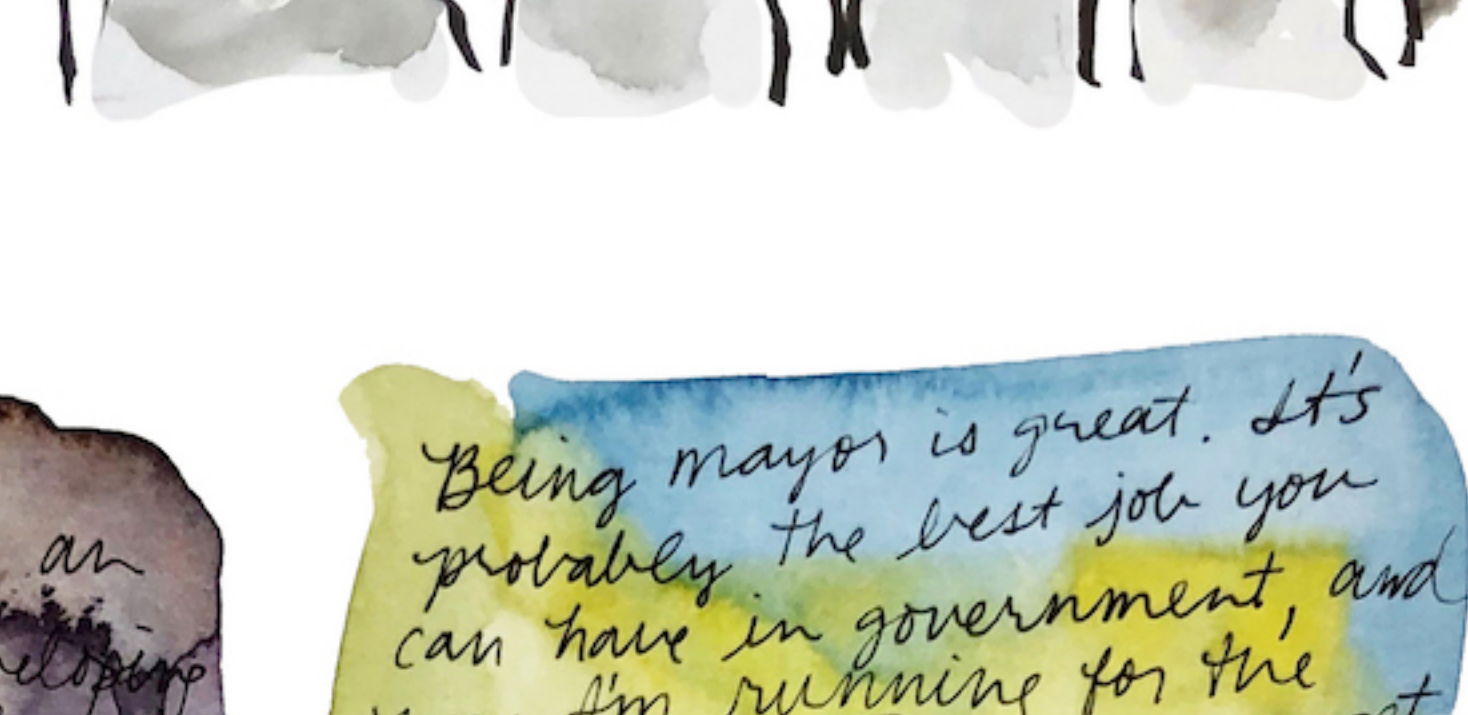
(actual page from my notebook.)

THERE WAS A SWEET MOMENT WHEN HE GOT A QUESTION FROM A SIX-YEAR-OLD.

(THAT THE CHILD WAS asleep

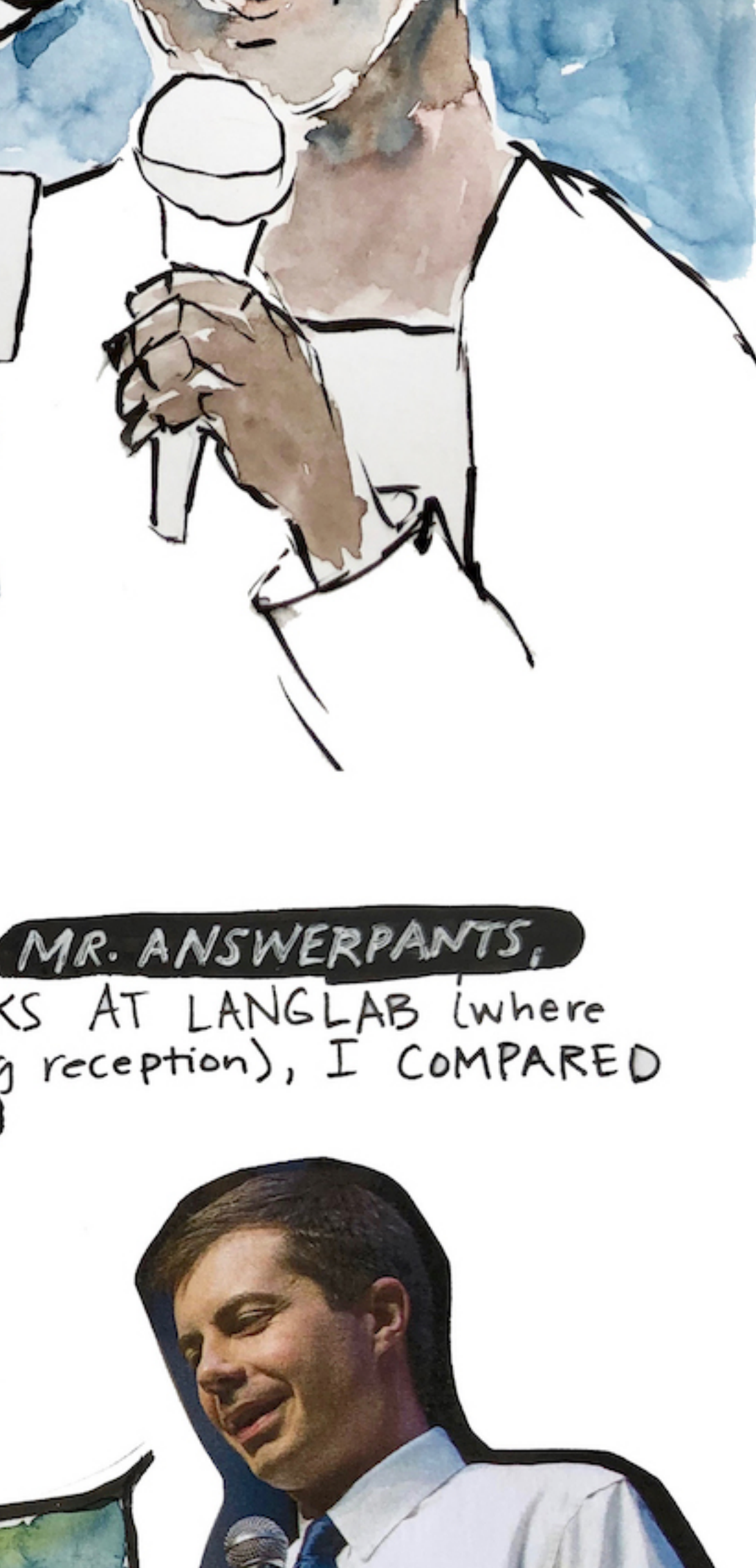
AT THE TIME DID NOT DETER MAYOR PETE FROM GIVING ONE OF HIS LONGEST ANSWERS OF THE NIGHT.)

What's your favorite food, and what's it like to be mayor?



BUT THE QUESTION THAT GOT THE BIGGEST AUDIENCE RESPONSE

Can you get **TRADER JOE'S** to come to South Bend?



EVEN THOUGH I HAD CALLED HIM **MR. ANSWERPANTS**, LATER THAT NIGHT OVER DRINKS AT LANGLAB (where Pete + Chasten had their wedding reception), I COMPARED HIS PERFORMANCE TO A **BALLET DANCER'S** IN GRACE, ELEGANCE + TECHNICAL SKILL.

I WAS ESPECIALLY IMPRESSED BY THE WAY HE **pirouetted** THE TRADER JOE'S QUESTION INTO MORE PRESSING ISSUES

We have to ensure that ALL our residents have access to fresh food... full service grocery stores... emergency food efforts... sustainable local food... community gardens... farmers markets

AN IMPORTANT SKILL FOR DANCERS and **PRESIDENTS**

